

REMARKS

Applicant submits this Amendment in response to the Office Action mailed on March 6, 2008.

In the Office, claims 1, 2, and 4-7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by Tamura (U.S. Patent No. 7,331,751 B2); claim 3 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Tamura in view of Sundar et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,198,976 B1); claims 12, 13, and 15-17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Tamura in view of Reimer et al. (U.S. Publication No. 2002/0192056), and claim 14 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Tamura and Reimer et al. and further in view of Sundar. In addition, claims 12-17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph as allegedly being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

By this Amendment, Applicant cancels claims 1-7 and 12-17, and adds new claims 18-20. Applicant believes that no new matter has been added by the addition of new claims 18-20. After entry of this Amendment, claims 18-20 will remain pending. Of these, claim 18 is the only independent claim.

Applicant respectfully traverses the rejections and submits that new claims 18-20 are in condition for allowance, as set forth below.

§ 112 Rejection of Claims 12-17

Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection of claims 12-17 as allegedly being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Nevertheless, in the interest of expediting

prosecution of this application, Applicant has cancelled claims 12-17. Accordingly, Applicant believes the rejection of claims 12-17 under § 112 has been rendered moot.

Rejection of Claims 1-7 and 12-17 under §§ 102(e) and 103(a)

Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection of claims 1, 2, and 4-7 as allegedly being anticipated by Tamura. Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection of claim 3 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Tamura in view of Sundar et al. Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection of claims 12, 13, and 15-17 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Tamura in view of Reimer et al. Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection of claim 14 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Tamura and Reimer et al. and further in view of Sundar.

Nevertheless, in the interest of expediting prosecution of this application, Applicant has cancelled claims 1-7 and 12-17 by this Amendment. Accordingly, Applicant believes the rejections of claims 1-7 and 12-17 under §§ 102(e) and 103(a) have been rendered moot.

New Claims 18-20

New independent claim 18 currently recites, among other things, “a transfer mechanism which is provided in the transfer chamber so as to be connected to the linear transfer path under linearly moveable conditions and includes two jointed-arm mechanisms configured to receive substrates from the plurality of load lock chambers, translate the substrates along the linear transfer path, and carry the substrates simultaneously into and out of one or more of the first process chambers and the second process chambers in synchronization.”

The Office Action asserts that Tamura discloses a linear transfer path. (Office Action, page 3.) However, Tamura discloses a single, rotational vacuum robot 10 configured to transfer wafers between processing chamber blocks 3a, 3b, subsidiary processing chamber blocks 4a, 4b, load lock chamber 8, and unload lock chamber 9. (Col. 3, lines 8-15.) Because the processing chamber blocks 3a, 3b, subsidiary processing chamber blocks 4a, 4b, load lock chamber 8, and unload lock chamber 9 are disposed in a rotational configuration (Fig. 1), the transfer mechanism cannot be “connected to the linear transfer path under linearly moveable conditions,” as recited in independent claim 18. Moreover, because Tamura merely teaches a single rotational robot 10, Tamura cannot be read to disclose “two jointed-arm mechanisms configured,” as recited in independent claim 18.

The Office Action also asserts that Reimer et al. discloses a vacuum robot 112 that may either be single or dual bladed. (Office Action, page 5.) However, Reimer et al. teaches a first transfer robot 112A and a second transfer robot 112B, both of which are configured to rotate about a respective central axis. Accordingly, the transfer robots of Reimer et al. are not “connected to the linear transfer path under linearly moveable conditions,” as recited in independent claim 18. Moreover, the transfer robots of Reimer et al. are not “configured to receive substrates from the plurality of load lock chambers, translate the substrates along the linear transfer path,” as recited in independent claim 18.

Thus, neither Tamura nor Reimer et al., either alone or in combination, discloses each and every element of independent claim 18. Accordingly, Applicant submits that claim 18 is in condition for allowance.

Claims 19 and 20 depend directly from claim 18 and include every element thereof. Thus, claims 19 and 20 are allowable for at least the same reasons as described above with respect to claim 18.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that this claimed invention, as amended, is neither anticipated nor rendered obvious in view of the prior art references cited against the pending claims. Applicant therefore requests the entry of this Amendment and the amendments contained herein, the Examiner's reconsideration and reexamination of the application, and the timely allowance of the pending claims. Should it be necessary to resolve any additional concerns and expedite the issuance of a Notice of Allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicant's undersigned representative at (571)203-2735.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our deposit account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

FINNEGAN, HENDERSON, FARABOW,
GARRETT & DUNNER, L.L.P.

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By: /David W. Hill/
David W. Hill
Reg. No. 28,220